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Throughout mid-July, the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission (GGCHCC) is conducting public engagement meetings to capture comments from Gullah/Geechee community members about how they want the GGCHCC to recognize and manage places, things, and traditions considered important to them. If you would like to participate, you may submit comments electronically by visiting us online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/guge>. Once there, just click on *Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor*. This information and insight will be compiled in a Management Plan that, together with an environmental assessment, will provide the foundation that will guide program development, protect natural and cultural resources, and the management direction of the corridor for the next 10 to 15 years. Your attendance at these meetings is encouraged and welcomed.

Several questions have been circulating since the development of this commission and the increased focus on the Gullah/Geechee people and their communities. These questions are addressed below:

Is the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission the same thing as the Gullah/Geechee Nation?

No, the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission and the Gullah/Geechee Nation are two distinct and separate entities. The only nation represented by the GGCHCC collectively is the United States of America. Along this historic corridor, enslaved Africans and their descendants, including many of our ancestors, worked the rice, cotton, and indigo plantations that made our country, the United States of America, a great nation.

Just where is the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor?

The four-state cultural heritage corridor is a congressionally designated National Heritage Area that encompasses coastal communities from Wilmington, NC, through South Carolina and Georgia, to Jacksonville, FL, and extends about 30 miles inland. These historic lands and communities have been inhabited by Gullah/Geechee people for more than three centuries. The GGCHCC is grateful for our collaboration with the National Park Service and the Denver Service Center to develop a management plan that will represent a departure from traditional methods and outcomes.

What is the Role of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission?

Legislation, authored by Congressman James E. Clyburn, established the GGCHCC as a commission of 15 members and 10 alternates appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Administered by the National Park Service, the commission is legislated to preserve and interpret the community's pride in its history and traditions and to provide educational and inspirational opportunities that invite the public and residents to visit and learn about an important aspect of American culture.

Is there an official Gullah/Geechee spokesperson?

No. Although I am the Chairman of the commission, each commission member is an authority on aspects of our culture. Each commissioner has expertise in fields ranging from anthropology to education, research, community development, performing arts, and writing. As Chairman, I make official public statements about the GGCHCC; however, no one individual is spokesperson for the commission or the Gullah/Geechee community.

How can we get up-to-date information?

Please contact one of the commissioners representing your state or Michael Allen, National Park Service Gullah Geechee Coordinator, at 843-297-3836 (Michael_Allen@nps.gov). We want you to know us, and we want to know you. We want you to know how we've organized and what we've set as our Mission and Vision. We look forward to hearing your comments about the development of the GGCHCC during public engagement meetings in or near your community.

How do I find out who the commissioners are and the states they represent?

You can begin by attending the public engagement meetings or by placing your comments at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/guge>. Just click on *Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor*. The list of meeting locations dates and times as well as the commissioners' names and the states they represent also may be viewed there. With your input, the success of developing a cultural heritage corridor of the Gullah/Geechee community, for the Gullah/Geechee community, and by and about the Gullah/Geechee community will be well underway! We all are committed to seeking partners and funding and working to preserve and celebrate our rich culture and heritage.

